

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11

TRSE-00 OMB-01 HA-05 /072 W

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R 231248Z MAY 78

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6156

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 08527

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, RP

SUBJECT: CABINET POST LIKELY FOR MRS. MARCOS

1. SUMMARY: MRS. MARCOS MUST RESIGN AS METRO MANILA GOVERNOR TO TAKE HER PLACE IN THE INTERIM LEGISLATURE NEXT MONTH. BUT SHE SEEMS ALMOST CERTAIN TO GET A PROPOSED CABINET POST AS SECRETARY OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS, WITH CERTAIN RESPONSIBILITY FOR ALL URBAN AREAS INCLUDING METRO MANILA. HER NEW POSITION WOULD GIVE HER FORMAL POWERS COUNTRYWIDE AND BE REGARDED AS A SIGNIFICANT STEP IN HER DRIVE FOR GREATER STATURE AND POWER. END SUMMARY.

2. MANILA HAS RECENTLY BEGUN TO FOCUS ON THE FACT THAT MRS. MARCOS MUST RESIGN AS METRO MANILA GOVERNOR IN ORDER TO TAKE HER SEAT AS INTERIM LEGISLATURE ASSEMBLYWOMAN. UNDER THE ELECTION CODE, ALL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS EXCEPT CABINET MEMBERS MUST RESIGN IF THEY ARE ELECTED TO THE LEGISLATURE. THE MOST OBVIOUS SOLUTION TO THIS DILEMMA IS TO NAME HER TO THE CABINET. IN A CONVERSATION WITH AN EMBASSY WIFE DURING VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE'S VISIT, MRS. MARCOS SAID THAT SHE WAS GIVING SERIOUS THOUGHT TO ASSUMING A CABINET POSITION IN THE HUMAN SETTLEMENTS AREA. VARIOUS MANILA COLUMNISTS HAVE SUGGESTED THIS SOLUTION IN RECENT WEEKS. AND PRESIDENT MARCOS ACKNOWLEDGED MAY 18

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THAT IT MIGHT HAPPEN. MRS. MARCOS MODESTLY AGREED TO DO WHATEVER SHE WAS ASKED AS LONG AS SHE COULD "SERVE THE PEOPLE."{(

3. OVER THE PAST WEEKEND "DAILY EXPRESS" AND "EVENING POST" HAVE PUBLISHED EDITORIALS FAVORING HER APPOINTMENT TO A PROPOSED POST OF SECRETARY OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS, WITH

RESPONSIBILITY FOR ALL URBAN AREAS INCLUDING METRO MANILA.
"TIMES JOURNAL" MAY 22 CARRIED A NEWS STORY, OBVIOUSLY
GENERATED IN MALACANANG, NOTING THAT "A NATIONWIDE CLAMOR
FOR THE APPOINTMENT...GREW YESTERDAY AS ENDORSEMENTS
POURED IN FROM VARIOUS PARTS OF THE COUNTRY."

4. SIMULTANEOUSLY, MRS. MARCOS, AS CHAIRPERSON OF THE
NATIONAL HUMAN SETTLEMENTS COMMISSION, TOLD AN AIRPORT
PRESS CONFERENCE IN ILOCOS MAY 19 OF HER PLANS FOR THE
INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT OF ALL 1,600 CITIES AND MUNICIPALI-
TIES IN THE PHILIPPINES. SHE SAID THAT AS NHSC CHAIR-
PERSON SHE COULD "FREE THE PRESIDENT OF THE HOUSEKEEPING
JOBS" SO THAT HE COULD CONCENTRATE ON "THE INTERNATIONAL
AND POLITICAL PROBLEMS OF THE COUNTRY." SHE ADDED THAT
SHE HOPED TO HAVE EACH URBAN AREA DEVELOP A CHARACTER OF
ITS OWN BY ENCOURAGING PEOPLE TO USE INDIGENOUS MATERIALS
FOR THEIR HOUSES. THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT WOULD DO THE
PLANNING, SHE SAID. LOCAL OFFICIALS WOULD EXPLAIN THE
PROGRAMS, AND A MANAGEMENT STAFF OF "1,000 TECHNOCRATS AND
EXPERTS" WOULD MAKE SURE THE PLANS WERE IMPLEMENTED.

5. COMMENT: IT SEEMS INEVITABLE THAT MRS. MARCOS WILL BE
GIVEN A CABINET POSITION, AND A NEW DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN
SETTLEMENTS SEEMS THE MOST LIKELY PLACE FOR HER. WHETHER
IT WILL ULTIMATELY HAVE THE VAST "HOUSEKEEPING" POWERS
THAT MRS. MARCOS ENVISAGES REMAINS TO BE SEEN. NONETHE-
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LESS, IT IS APPARENT THAT SHE WILL SHORTLY HAVE FORMAL
RESPONSIBILITY NATIONWIDE. THIS IS SURE TO BE SEEN
LOCALLY AS ANOTHER AND IMPORTANT STEP IN HER LONG-STANDING
DRIVE FOR INCREASED PERSONAL STATURE AND POWER. TOUSSAINT

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